DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 108 457 FL 005 509

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TITLE Sociolinguistics and Educational Planning in the U.S.
PUB DATE 28 Jun 73
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the AAAS Seminar on Science and Man (Mexico City, June 1973)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Attitudes; Compensatory Education; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Innovation; *Educational Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; Language Arts; Language Planning; *Sociolinguistics; Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the role of linguistics in educational planning and argues that, in order for sociolinguistic principles to be introduced and implemented, it will be necessary for sociolinguists to remember the failures of linguistics in the past, to rethink their attitudes concerning the relationship of their discipline to education, and to plan a program for influencing teacher preparation, research, materials development and evaluation. Sociolinguists will have to: become tolerant of the discipline toward which they hope to have influence; start from the problems as they are perceived by the target group; examine extant innovative strategies and motivations and develop new ones or adapt old ones; and address the implementation of their goals by infiltrating professional education organizations. It is concluded that the implementation of sociolinguistic planning in the schools is not likely to be any more successful than structural or generative linguistics was unless the task is seen from a realistically broad perspective which includes political as well as academic components. (Author/AM)

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Sociolinguistics and Educational Planning in the U. S.

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June 28, 1973, Mexico City
AAAS Seminar on Science and Man

TL005509

Sociolinguistics and Educational Planning in the U. S.

1. Linguistics and Educational Planning in U. S. Schools

Historically speaking it is reasonably safe to observe that linguistics has had, at best, only a minor influence on native language education in the United States. To be sure, teaching materials for beginning readers now are beginning to recognize that reading is a language processing process and texts are beginning to be written in language which approximates natural speech. Some language arts programs are even beginning to stress linguistic pluralism and place proper value on language variation, but much, if not most, of the focus of the linguist in American education in the past has been negative. That is, he has chosen to address himself to what is wrong with the system as it is rather than to enmesh himself in the question of what constructive contribution he can make to the field. The structural linguists' attack on traditional grammar in the forties and fifties was largely a description of what was wrong with the way traditional teachers were teaching about language. The stance was one of laughing at the atrocities of the stereotyped, old-fashioned, prescriptive school teacher and, however clear and accurate such criticisms were, they most certainly could not be considered tactful.

Teachers concerned with the preservation of traditional values also saw in structural linguistics a threat to the status quo. The linguists were loud in their rhetoric but were generally unable to compliment their criticisms with a positive program of replacement. This situation is not unparalleled in the field of educational change. The apparent excessive claims of behavioral psychologists, for example, have been under constant and often convincing attack by advocates of a cognitive approach but the cognitivists have yet to provide a convincing programmatic alternative to all of the idols which they are attempting to destroy. This is not to say that they are wrong in their criticisms--only that the process seems to call for attack and criticism before the development of a viable and tested alternative.

The advent of generative grammar in no way improved the interrelationship of linguistics and educational concerns. Almost before the structuralists had rallied them-

selves together to produce an alternative strategy for the application of linguistics to schoo problems, the revolution from within linguistics began to discredit any potential application To make matters even more difficult, generative theory changed (and continues to change) very rapidly during the sixties and early seventies making a shambles of any effort to relate it to the classroom. This is not to say that nothing from structural or generative grammar has proven useful to the classroom. On the contrary, a great deal has been learned about how language seems to work and about the undertakings and attitudes concerning language which a teacher might develop. In addition to factors such as those mentioned earlier, however, linguistics tended to focus its potential usefulness on language universals, deep and surface structure relationships and rules which generally characterized the innateness of native language. No one can doubt the usefulness of such study to linguists, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and philosophers, but one might seriously question the usefulness of such information to elementary and secondary school children. To put it another way, one might seriously ask what good it will do a child to learn how to talk about what he has already learned how to do. The general problems addressed by the teacher are concerned with helping children learn to write, read and speak better. The teacher might seriously question how information which explains extant competence might contribute answers to these problems. Naturally, a teacher might be expected to know these things, for it is her responsibility to know many things related to how a child has acquired his language, how language problems can be accurately diagnosed as well as the theoretical underpinnings of language production, but there is little reason to expect children to improve their writing, reading or speaking by studying how it is they know what they already know. It may contribute to their general knowledge of the universe but it is unlikely to have the immediate impact expected by the schoolroom.

With the relatively recent developments in sociolinguistics we have come a bit closer to the sorts of problems which also concern the schools. Because of its focus on variability, sociolinguistics makes a better match with the setting in which a child can be found than its recent predecessors did. Most children in the U. S. are surrounded by people who speak with variation which stems from differences in social status, geography, sex, age and style. They are faced with conflicting pressures to conform to the norms of their peers, their parents, their school and their region. Often they are placed in con-

flict with a value system which contrasts to that of the school. In addition, some children are in conflict with the language and culture of textbooks and instructional strategies and the mismatch between their lifestyles and those of the educational process is too great for them to overcome. They may be placed in further conflict by developments of minority awareness which may militate against school or majority norms in a way in which they may become politically involved to their own disadvantage.

Sociolinguistic research which has been done recently in urban language in the U. S. (Labov 1966, 1968, Shuy, Wolfram and Riley 1967, Wolfram 1969, 1971, Fasold 1972), in language attitudes (Frender and Lambert 1972, Fishman 1969, Williams 1970, 1971, Tucker 1971, Shuy and Fasold 1973), in language planning (Das Gupta 1969, 1971, Rubin and Jernudd 1972, Rubin and Shuy 1973), in the ethnography of speaking (Abrahams 1969, Bauman and Sherzer, in press) and in pidginization and creolization (Hymes 1971) are the types of research which bear more closely on the problems faced by the schools. One reason why such studies bear directly is that they all deal with real rather than abstract language situations, and that they face squarely the fact of variability and deal with it as a kind of systematic and predictable continuum.

The application of such research appears to be, once again, promising evidence of the applicability of linguistics to educational problems. An enthusiasm and optimism much like that of the early days of structural and generative grammar is once again upon us and now is the time to prepare for a strategy of planned application. We must avoid the overenthusiasm of the friends of linguistics who sometimes promise more than we can offer. We must avoid the temptation to be nasty or arrogant as we face the linguistic ignorance of the education system and we must be careful to build a complete strategy rather than a partial one.

2. Sociolinguistics in the Context of Educational Innovation

Advocates of any new plans for implementing sociolinguistic principles in the schools would do well to examine the current situation with regard to the process of innovation, a subject which has become of great concern to fields which are undergoing dramatic changes. Those who have studied innovation in education, agriculture and medicine have come to agree on a number of things which may be useful to us in the focus we have selected here. For example, in the past the process of innovation has been less observed

and studied than specific innovations themselves. Instead, the organizations of power, particularly federal, state and local education systems, have shot in the dark blindly, hoping to find effective strategies for change. The cyclical nature of the band-wagon innovation propagated by the United States Office of Education in recent years is a case in point. During the sixties, the quick and easy answer to the problems of the schools seeme to be to give them more money. The more recent fallacy of the seventies seems to be that of the problems of the schools will be solved by more efficient management techniques and schemes, especially those which are transportable from private industry and business. Both approaches look at the problems of the schools quite myopically. For example, they both assume that the right research has been done, that adequate translation has been made from research to practice, that teachers have been adequately prepared to carry it out and that all which is lacking is the right delivery system. One must agree that the delivery system needs improvement but the more seious question, several steps further back, involves what it is that is being delivered. One weakness in the process of innovation in the U. S. schools in general, then, is that it tends to view the process from the delivery end only rather than in its entirety. This error is, of course, a quite natural one to make. The schools also frequently make it with regard to children, who are moving from their viewpoint toward an adult viewpoint through stages which are obscured to the adult who has forgotten how it was when he went through the same process.

Innovation in agriculture, medicine, education and other fields can be represented by a bell-shaped curve. At the one extreme are the laggards--those who trail behind all new developments, often leading to failure and ultimate drop-out (at least in agriculture and medicine; whether or not educational laggards drop-out is a researchable question). At the other end are the innovators, a small percentage of practitioners who actually go to the research for their information, then bring it back to the practical setting. Such people are generally regarded as wild-eyed radicals who are a little bit crazy. In education, such people frequently go on for graduate degrees and leave the public classrooms all together. Right next to the innovators in the bell-shaped curve are the early-adopters. They differ from the innovators in that they do not seek out the research. But they do act upon research which is brought to them. In a sense, they lack the energy or creativity of the innovator, but if properly stimulated, they have the ability to bring about similar results.

By now our bell-shaped curve has been accounted for only by a very small percentage of the total client population in the innovation matrix. By far, the majority of such clients operate in the vast center of the curve. Scattered throughout the border adjacent to the early adopters, however, are a number of individuals, not easily categorized as a unified group, who can be called opinion leaders. Some may be early adopters and others may be from the large mid-section of the curve. Few are innovators and probably none are laggards. Opinion leaders may respond to the logic of the argument which persuades early adopters or they may be motivated by quite illogical or non-academic pressures. The illogic of such motivation may be clearly seen in agriculture, where a new type of seed is used primarily because a rival neighboring farmer is using it and one does not wish to be left behind. A motivation to innovate in medicine may come from the fact that nothing else has worked so why not try the new product or technique? In fact, in the two preceding examples lies most of the motivation for innovation in education. In a study of innovation in American schools (Shuy 1970), it was observed that many city schools were innovating primarily because they were in trouble and they knew it, whereas the sort of innovation going on in suburban systems seemed to stem from the motive of not wanting to trail behind the rival, neighboring school systems. Most of the innovative practices displayed by the fourteen school systems investigated in that study were of the "management strategy" variety, frequently involving new grade-level arrangements, architectural designs or performance contracting.

To a certain extent, school innovations involving linguistics have probably stemmed from the same two motivations. A school system in trouble could adopt a program labelled linguistic because it had tried many other things which did not work so why not try something new? Or a school system might adopt a linguistic program primarily because a neighboring system had already adopted it and it did not want to appear old fashioned.

Linguistics, in its past attempts at influencing the schools, has not viewed the process of innovation broadly or clearly. Typically our primary focus has been on innovators--those school teachers who came to us for information and who were willing to see life from our viewpoint, take courses that were not developed especially for them, then carry this information to their own school settings. Some linguists went so far as to bring the knowledge to the schools, providing materials for the early adopters but from there the strategy was at the mercy of the system. No special care was taken to win the opinion leaders and no particular progress has been made.

3. The Current Need for Educational Planning in Sociolinguistics

The major point in this discussion has been to sketch the nature of innovation by linguists and advocates of linguistics and to point out how the development of linguistic principles in the classroom in the past has been unplanned, unsystematic and relatively ineffective. It has relied on the shakey premise that educational innovators will come to linguistics in order to obtain the good things which are necessary for useful application. Few linguists have taken seriously the strategy of reaching the early adopters and those who have tried have frequently been one-sided in their attempts. There have been few, if any, efforts at reaching the opinion leaders. One thesis of this paper is that if sociolinguists are going to continue to make claims about its usefulness to the schools, they will have to plan carefully to avoid the mistakes of linguistics in the past. They cannot sit back and expect education to make the entire effort.

In order to engage in effective educational planning it will be necessary for linguists to effect a rather major attitude shift in themselves. It has been popular, especially in the past decade, for linguists to delimit that which and only that which they, as linguists, are qualified to say. Perhaps this has come about as a healthy reaction against the overpromise of linguists in the forties and fifties. Perhaps it developed as a by-product of the attempt by linguistics to establish its own identity and territory. Linguistics as it was known in the fifties was very difficult to describe for it seemed to partake of many other fields and had little identity of its own. With the development of a more sophisticated theory came a natural abstractness which placed a gulf between linguistics and other fields as well as between practical concerns within linguistics. It seems to have been the history of most disciplines to begin with practical questions, then develop more and more along abstract lines. Meanwhile, there are always those who either, with naive altruism or with a more cynical opportunism try to capitalize on the prestige of a field either before its theory is well-enough developed or merely in an effort to make use of the current fads.

Regardless of its origins, however, this tendency of linguists to disqualify themselves from having anything to say about the educational relationships of linguistics has tended to widen the gulf that exists between the schools and linguistic knowledge. One predictable outcome of such a gulf is that the university course usually called introduction to linguistics is usually set up for linguistics majors only. Those who major in sociology,

psychology or education must approach the field just as linguists do in order to get anything out of it. In this, linguistics departments can be accused of a kind of compensatory education model in which the learner (in this case, the educator) is told that he must adjust to linguistics rather than causing linguistics to adjust to him. Many linguists have argued that educators frequently overlook one of the basic tenets of education--starting with the learner where he is. On the other hand, it appears that linguistics is often quite guilty of the same sort of practice. Likewise linguists accuse some educators of dealing with children from different (often minority) cultures as deficient rather than different. Yet a linguistics which perceives the objectives and methods of educators as deficient rather than different from the objectives and methods of linguistics is surely guilty of the same sort of condemnation. The application here is that if linguists are really concerned about relating their field to other disciplines such as education, they must set aside old biases against non-linguists and accept the vulnerabilities and insecurities involved in operating out of their own depth. For too long linguists have assumed the role of isolative egotism, sitting in critical judgment of other fields but not venturing out to them with what linguistics has to offer.

4. Areas in Which Sociolinguistics Offers Viable Help to Education

In contrast to many eariler models of applied linguistics, sociolinguistics has a great deal to offer the classroom teacher. In its description of variability, sociolinguistics gets right to the heart of many school problems involving writing, reading and talking. It is in this area of variability that answers can be found to perplexing questions about how to delimit styles, exactly how to affect acceptability in school writing and talking, how to appreciate the dynamics of variation in the language of others, how people set themselves off from each other through language, how subtle variation between spoken and written language can cause problems in composition or reading, and many others.. Native language teaching must deal with these issues, but it has never before had the tools to do so.

More broadly, sociolinguistic information may be used to help rethink the education of teachers, the development of instructional materials, and techniques and the building of educational programs of various sorts.

If sociolinguists really have something to say to pedagogy, and if they can over-

come the bad feelings caused by arrogance and overpromise of linguists in the past, they must do it by starting with the teachers's and the children's problems, not with a stance of aloofness. Furthermore, they must plan to approach the problems of the classroom in many different ways and at many different levels at the same time.

A. The Preparation of Teachers

One might hypothesize, for example, that what sociolinguists should do is to force teacher preparation institutions to rethink their curriculum, placing language study at the center rather than at the periphery. As appropriate as this might sound, reality will soon make very clear that it is difficult to get education departments at universities to change even if they know they must. An illustration of this difficulty may be seen in the current situation involving standardized tests in reading. A great deal of pressure has been placed on test manufacturers to change their tests to conform to more modern findings. Certain publishers respond with mild interest but explain that their tests still very well and that they do not intend to stop producing a good seller. The only strategy to get these tests changed is to lobby for boycotting the test--an economic solution to an economic problem. The educational planning involved in such an issue is that which addressed itself to consciousness raising, organizing and communication of the problem to the appropriate opinion leaders. Similarly, vested interests in education departments will continue to hamper change there. If it is true that innovation comes primarily from the realization that one is in trouble or from the jealousy of neighboring products, the strategy for change becomes clear. Either we convince the departments that they are in trouble or we build on their tendency toward jealousy of their neighbors.

(1) Planning for Change From Outside the System

Both strategies tend to plan from within the system. An alternative approach would be to devise a teacher preparation program totally outside the conventional education department framework. One such program which stresses sociolinguistics is currently being developed at The University of California at San Diego, under the direction of Hugh Mehan. The program is currently in its very beginning stages and it is still too early to evaluate either its success or its potential for impact. In essence, a select group of future teachers is being trained for certification in the content areas most rele-

vant to elementary teaching in the U. S. (mathematics, social studies, language arts and science), while the more traditional education courses are brought in as supplementary services. The base is in the content areas, two of which, language and social studies, are heavily sociolinguistic in orientation. Such a program bears careful watching for, if it is successful, it may signal an efficient method of overcoming the educational lock-step in teacher preparation which is cuased by the self-perpetuation of vested interests.

(2) Planning for Change From Within the System

Perhaps the more difficult task is one which tries to work for change from within the existing education system. There are predictable reasons why it is difficult to work for change within the education system. In the United States teacher training institutions are just that--institutionalized entities. Drastic changes in teacher preparation (such as putting language at the core of the education of elementary education majors rather than at the periphery) suggest drastic staffing problems. Should a professor of the history of education be dismissed in favor of a sociolinguist? The problem is not unlike the potential difficulty facing speech departments as they gradually realize the need to prepare speech teachers to distinguish between pathological and social variation in the speech of their students. If they suddenly require all speech teachers to take a course in educational sociolinguistics, who will teach these courses? Not only are few speech professors trained in this area but also very few linguists. But at least the future speech teacher has had some background in phonetics and language. The education major usually gets none whatsoever, despite the fact that the only communication system the child has when he enters school is his oral language. How do we incorporate this training in linguistics, sociolinguistics in particular, without reconstituting staff balance and reordering certification requirements? And how do we deal with the buck-passing that ultimately stops with the teacher, who gets blamed for all the failures in her training and in her bureaucracy simply because there is no one else to blame failure on except the children? What do we do about school board members like William O'Connor of Boston who claimed: "We have no inferior education in our schools. What we have been getting is an inferior type of student."? What do we do about compensatory education advocates who claim like O'Connor, that if children do not learn it is because they have not gotten up to the social and cognitive level of the school? Despite decades of saying that schools should start with children where they are, both O'Connor and the compensatory education advo-

cates tend to blame the poor, defenseless child for his own failure. Changing from within the system may be a great deal more difficult than even the most optimistic observer might suggest. To change the system will involve subtlety far beyond anything linguists have suggested to date.

On the assumption that teacher preparation institutions either do not realize that there is a problem or that their commitment to the status quo is too great to permit changes which would allow easy access to training in sociolinguistics, at least three plans are available for working within the system: infiltration, the jealousy motif and management control.

(a) Infiltration. This plan puts the major pressure on the sociolinguist. He must utilize his training and manage to fit into an already existing educational system. (in this case, a teacher training institution) by adjusting his concerns to the expectations and needs of the department in which he works. This means that a person trained in sociolinguistics may need to teach courses in educational methods, philosophy and research for which he has been only marginally prepared. The major problem is in being hired in the first place. A second problem is in deferring his gratification or in waiting for change to come about slowly. In this, linguists as a whole have had little experience, at least until the recent job market decline. In many departments, such as English literature well trained specialists may have to teach general introductory courses for several years until their departmental seniority allows them the privilege of teaching the area of their specialty. This has not been generally true of linguists until rather recently, largely because the field was expanding as a field and new graduates found little difficulty teaching their specialty almost as soon as they were hired. Today we have a different situation. Like the literature specialists who are forced to teach freshman composition (for which they were poorly prepared, if prepared at all), linguists are forced to teach in fields only marginally relevant to their training. My point here, however, is that training in sociolinguistics is closer to educational concerns than apprenticeship early-teaching areas usually are for specialists in other fields. To be sure, the training of sociolinguistics might well gear itself to this eventuality.[1]

In terms of long range planning, however, the strategy of infiltration will be a slow and arduous one. Its success will probably depend on how seriously the task is taken by the sociolinguist, how well he can survive in an "alien" climate, how well he is

accepted by his colleagues and how well he does his job.

(b) The Jealousy Motif. It was noted earlier that one of the major motivations for educational innovation is one in which a system changes primarily because another system which has status has already implemented that change. Innovation in suburban school systems in the U. S. frequently follow this model. If the schools of Winnetka, Illinois, Shaker Heights, Ohio or Montgomery County, Maryland innovate in a certain manner, it can be expected that other school systems will be sure to follow. In an effort to test the jealousy motif as a model for educational planning involving sociolinguistic concerns, various sociolinguists at Georgetown University have been working with in-service education in the Norfolk, Virginia public schools. In practice, the project was to assist in the desegregation effort of that school system by providing teachers, especially white teachers who had not previously encountered black children, with knowledge of the communication system of minority children. Less obviously, it was an attempt to build positive attitudes on the part of teachers toward children whose language and culture were foreign to them. For the purposes of educational planning, however, the project served as an experiment in testing the jealousy motif in a new and interesting manner. The question was: Can educational change be brought about in local teacher training institutions by building into a major school system's in-service program features which are seen as desireable, therefore transportable, to the pre-service programs? In other words, the strategy was to provide such an attractive in-service program that the local universities will want to modify their curriculum to keep up with Norfolk expectations.[2] It is still too early to evaluate the success of this experiment in utilizing the jealousy motif, but there are many early signs that much of our in-service work will be continued by local institutions in the future.[3]

(c) Management Control. A third type of planning for educational change in sociolinguistics is one which observes the importance of the well-known principle of innovation which recognized that for successful innovation, the innovator must be protected by those in authority over him. The process of educational innovation may begin at any place in the system, but unless the people in control understand it and at least tolerate it, the innovation is not likely to survive. An example of past error, now rectified, in this matter may be found in much of the U. S. Office of Education support of Title XI summer workshops to upgrade the knowledge and skills of teachers. Many

of these workshops were crash courses in linguistics for teachers who had been trained before the newer findings were made available. Typically, workshop directors selected only those teachers who were the brightest, youngest, most flexible and daring. In short, they usually selected innovators who absorbed the information, returned to their schools and were considered wildly radical in every attempt at implementing what they had just learned. They were in no way protected in their innovation and often became discouraged, if not embittered. Efficient planning might have yielded better results. But, as everyone who has labored with educational administrators knows, this is a difficult group with whom to work. For one thing, they are pressured by groups of various sorts, many of whom are political in their concerns for education and are obsessed by a complex with which linguists are thoroughly familiar. For years, linguists have been plagued by criticisms and observations about language by people who think they know more about it than they really do. Thus, everyone becomes an authority on dictionaries, despite a lack of training in lexicography. Everyone becomes an authority on usage, despite a lack of training in sociolinguistics. People are so close to language that they fail to see it--often even as a field of study. Recently education has been meeting the same fate. Critics of education have sprung up all around us, offering easy and simple answers to questions which are far more complex than they will ever know. Such people will continue to be a major annoyance to administrators, whose position it is to respond to critics of all persuasions.

Naturally, however, not all administrators are gullible and not all are unwilling to listen to what sociolinguistics might have to offer then. Some are sympathetic with the implications of sociolinguistics for replotting the training of teachers and some have the status and power to will such changes into existence. A current project being planned as part of the work of the Sociolinguistics Committee of the Social Science Research Council is one which would bring together a small number of Deans of teacher training programs who have been identified as flexible and somewhat sympathetic to sociolinguistic concerns. Such deans will meet with an equally small number of sociolinguists and educators who might be expected to implement future changes in teacher preparation programs. The planning theory involved is simply to set up a gradual adjustment of curriculum in a few, well-chosen programs where there is already a sympathetic administration. Again, this plan is by no means underway and is, as yet,

not subject to evaluation. It does evidence, however, an example of educational planning in sociolinguistics in the United States.

To this point we have addressed outselves to plans for reaching teachers and plans for changing both pre-service and in-service training. Obviously the planning suggested is only suggestive and is by no means comprehensive or complete. But mention must also be made of strategies to implement sociolinguistic principles at other levels. These strategies for extending the influence of sociolinguistic principles to the schools involve the achievement of power. Occasionally the educational system will look to "outsiders" for advice but to assume implementation of that advice one must become, as it were, a part of the establishment. The ineffectiveness of the major critics of education who advocate its complete overthrow displays a sharp contrast to the power exerted in the area of consumer rights by Ralph Nader, whose strategy has been to work more or less from within the system. The strategy being suggested here may not be as dramatic as the one generally used by Nader, for there is considerably less public dissatisfaction about quality education than there is about faulty manufacturing; but it is closer to his approach than to out and out revolution.

The history of innovation tells us that in order for such change to be absorbed by the system a certain temper for innovation must exist. It is by no means clear that sociolinguistics is perceived as educators as the answer to their problems. Other factors which militate against such a temper stem from past arrogance and overpromise of other types of linguistics for the schools, the compelling sense of self-preservation witnessed in university education departments and the general stereotype of the nature of education as held by the public at large. That is, the establishment is not predisposed to change, the public does not really understand the problem and our past track record has not been enviable. These are certainly not conditions under which revolutionary change can thrive. Instead we will need to be more subtle in our effort to establish the temper for sociolinguistic innovations in the schools.

If the preceding analysis is accurate, the tactic for establishing a temper for innovation must be carefully and solidly built. Sociolinguists who are concerned about education must go to education rather than to let education come to them. But not only must they go to education, they must also become accepted by education. This observation is not a popular one among linguists who hold education in particular scorn. To

be sure education has displayed many weaknesses and produced many failures. It is a popular thing to scorn fields which deal with practical rather than abstract matters, particularly in the academic world where the value system seems directly proportionate to abstract impracticality. But the simple truth of the matter is that the field of education also has its value systems, its establishment and its pecking order. An outsider may be treated with dignity, even heeded, but the ultimate success of his suggestion will depend on political factors in education, just as it does in any other field of study.

One obvious strategy for establishing political power for sociolinguistic principles in education is for sociolinguists to become accepted by the educationists as a functioning member of their establishment. A sociolinguist on a commission which deals with requirements for teacher certification is in a strategic position to suggest that language courses become central to the training of reading and language arts teachers. A sociolinguist on the evaluation panel of early childhood education programs being developed by educational laboratories and research and development centers is in a strategic position to effect changes in the staffing and focus of such projects. A sociolinguist in the administration of a city school system is in a strategic position for implementing changes suggested by his field in the humanizing of native language instruction. Not all sociolinguists, of course, will be able or willing to accept such roles, even as a supplementary aspect of their primary activities in sociolinguistics. But if we are to gain power within the field of education, it is likely that some of us will need to be so motivated. Such a strategy will involve our going to education with our ideas, presenting these ideas from the viewpoint of education rather than linguistics, expressing these ideas in terms and concepts which will be likely to be understood and valued, by developing tolerance for the ignorance and naivete of educators about our field and by admitting our own ignorance and naivete about certain understandings and skills held by educators.

It should be made clear at this point that certain dangers will accrue to those sociolinguists who agree to carry the good news to education. There is no assurance, for example, that they will be able to preserve their status among linguists who value only the abstract and despise the practical. Nor is there any assurance that the time and effort involved in such work will not impede their own sociolinguistic research projects. Values must always be seen in relationship to other values and one always lives within a framework of impositions.

B. Materials Development

In addition to the preparation of teachers, sociolinguistics has many things to offe the education process in the area of teaching materials. If the influence of sociolinguistics in the schools follows the examples set by its predecessors, structural and generative linguistics, we will soon be seeing a spate of programs labelled the sociolinguistic approach to reading, sociolinguistic language arts, the sociolinguistic oral language, etc. It would appear that now is the time to plan the potential usefulness of sociolinguistics to the development of educational materials before the field becomes faddish and the opportunists swoop in with still another set of lofty but unrealizable claims.

The effect of language variability on the acquisition of the reading process in youn children may serve as an example of the past ineffectiveness of sociolinguists to bring about change in practice in the United States, largely because of their myopic view, their inability to plan effectively and their failure to see the situation from the view of education in general. Following what had been learned in previous literacy research in a bilingual context, sociolinguists suggested that one strategy for reducing the mismatch between the printed page of the primer and the child's oral language would be to produce beginning reading texts in the child's own social dialect.[4] Theoretically this was an interesting hypothesis worthy of verification or rejection based on controlled experimentation. What the sociolinguists failed to determine in advance was the tremendous negative reaction such materials were to have on both teachers and parents. Good planning would have assessed this reaction in advance and geared for it in some way.

To avoid such catastrophes, it would be well for sociolinguists to anticipate and adjust for educator and community reactions well in advance of any public presentation. In Norfolk, for example, the public press was avoided and generally discouraged from describing the project until such time as it had established itself positively in the favor of the teachers involved. But planning is most certainly more tha[illegible]he avoidance of the press. One must anticipate administration objections, parental in[illegible]nt, teacher intimidation, publisher motives and student benefits with perceptive research and sampling from the very earliest stages.

It would seen obvious that the impact of sociolinguistics on the development of materials geared to improve the written composition of children from various minority groups would hinge on a number of factors: effective and accurate research, selection

of an appropriate vehicle for dessemination, an assesment of the potential public reaction to such materials (will they be thought to exploit, single out or degrade the potential audience?), and a clear estimate of how such materials might differ from or be similar to materials developed for the non-target audience. Fortunately, sociolinguistics has already come to grips with some aspects of these situations both in the teaching of standard English and in the teaching of reading. Although controversy still rages among linguists concerning whether or not the schools should offer to help speakers of non-standard English of any type (including Black English) learn to speak English according to school norms, all indications from research surveys (Cazden 1969, Hayes and Taylor 1971, Taylor 1973) show that minority communities favor such acquisition.

One last area in which sociolinguistics can play an important role in educational planning is in the area of evaluation, particularly in standardized testing. The United States is in a national mood which stresses accountability in education and this accountability is frequently determined by measurements such as nationally-normed standardized tests. Such tests frequently ignore expertise which sociolinguistics can provide in order to offer a more accurate and fair assessment of the child's skills and cognitive abilities. Several sociolinguists are currently at work on such concerns and their work will be of great assistance to educational evaluation in the future.[5]

5. Conclusion

We know that in order for sociolinguistic principles to be introduced and implemented in education we will need to plan carefully and develop a temper for such innovation. For such a temper to evolve, it will be necessary for sociolinguists to remember the failures of linguistics in the past, to rethink their attitudes concerning the relationship of their discipline to education and to plan a program for influencing teacher preparation, research, materials development and evaluation. Sociolinguists will have to become tolerant of the discipline toward which they hope to have influence, even to the extent of being vulnerable to its strengths and superiorities where they exist. They will have to start from the problems as they are perceived by the target group, whether the target be teachers, administrators, publishers, parents or politicians. They will need to examine extant innovative strategies and motivations and develop new ones or adapt old ones. Lastly, sociolinguists will have to address the implementation of their goals

by infiltrating porfessional education organizations and by becoming accepted as one of them in order to establish credibility from within. They will need to extend their influence to evaluation boards for government and foundation programs even by actually infiltrating the extant educational hierarchy on the local, state and federal level. These strategies, of course, are not to be done all by one person or at one time. But if the implementation we desire is to come about, it will be done more efficiently if a few strategic members are placed in appropriate positions.

The implementation of sociolinguistic planning in the schools is not likely to be any more successful than structural or generative linguistics was unless we see the task from a realistically broad perspective which includes political as well as academic components. Perhaps more important, however, is that this time we position ourselves in such a way that our suggestions can become reality.

NOTES:

[1] An example of this may be seen in the Sociolinguistics major at Georgetown University where a course in Sociolinguistics and Education is available to majors in the field.

[2] A complete description of the Norfolk project can be found in "Sociolinguistic Strategies for Teachers in a Southern School System", Proceedings of the Third International Congress on Applied Linguistics (Copenhagen), in press.

[3] Norfolk State University and Old Dominion University, for example, are offering similar work. Likewise, The University of Virginia extension program is now offering work in anthropology and sociolinguistics.

[4] See J. Baratz and R. Shuy (eds.) Teaching Black children to read, Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969 and J. Laffey and R. Shuy (eds.) Dialect differences, do they matter?, Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1973.

[5] Margaret Griffin and Barbara Horvath are currently editing a collection of analyses of standardized tests from a sociolinguistic perspective. The volume will be published by Newbury House.

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